

I appreciate the widespread concern for the crisis unfolding in Gaza since December 27. The recent conflict in between Palestinians and Israelis is as tragic as it was predictable. The fundamental lesson in the Middle East is clear: without political processes that strive continuously for peace, events and the acts of extremists can overpower the desire of people across the region to reject violence.

I voted "present" on H. Res. 34 because words matter and this resolution did not express adequately the scope of the humanitarian crisis. To that end I am joining other colleagues in urging the administration to work to meet the immediate humanitarian needs while we work for a ceasefire.

Any country facing such attacks would wish to respond firmly and decisively, yet it is frustrating to witness the region locked into a downward spiral of conflict. This path will give neither side what it wants, but will continue to destabilize the situation and further impede efforts at a resolution.

This cycle of violence must be broken. Yet, nearly a decade of failed Bush policies has left America in a weakened position at the table, less able to help deliver peace or improve the humanitarian situation on the ground. At least the administration declined to vote against a January 8 United Nations Security Council resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

Forceful U.S. diplomatic re-engagement now is critical. Though a secure Israel and an independent Palestinian state living side by side seems remote today, I have high hopes that the new Obama administration will exhibit a strong reversal of course and re-engage the region. Our efforts here today are inadequate to this task. We must not only work for a ceasefire that halts this backslide into chaos, but move forward toward an ultimate solution that recognizes the legitimate needs of both Israelis and Palestinians. We know where we need to go, we must have the will to achieve it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Earl Blumenauer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Earl" is written in a larger, more prominent script, while "Blumenauer" follows in a similar but slightly smaller script. The signature is set against a plain, light-colored background.

To see U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer's statement on Gaza, click [here](#) .